



National Brownfields Assessment Pilot *Bridgeport, CT*

Outreach and Special Projects Staff (5101)

Quick Reference Fact Sheet

EPA's Brownfields Economic Redevelopment Initiative is designed to empower States, communities, and other stakeholders in economic redevelopment to work together in a timely manner to prevent, assess, safely clean up, and sustainably reuse brownfields. A brownfield is a site, or portion thereof, that has actual or perceived contamination and an active potential for redevelopment or reuse. Between 1995 and 1996, EPA funded 76 National and Regional Brownfields Assessment Pilots, at up to \$200,000 each, to support creative two-year explorations and demonstrations of brownfields solutions. EPA is funding more than 27 Pilots in 1997. The Pilots are intended to provide EPA, States, Tribes, municipalities, and communities with useful information and strategies as they continue to seek new methods to promote a unified approach to site assessment, environmental cleanup, and redevelopment.

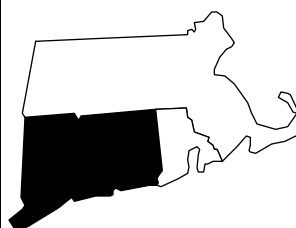
BACKGROUND

EPA selected the City of Bridgeport for a Brownfields Pilot. Bridgeport is the largest and most economically, fiscally, and demographically distressed city in Connecticut. Industrial employment has dropped steadily in each of the last three decades. Unemployment in impacted industrial corridors is significantly higher than the City-wide rate of 8.6 percent. Approximately 50 percent of the area's manufacturing base has been lost in the past decade. The area's poverty rate is 17 percent, and per capita income in the area is 60 percent of the State average. Many businesses have left Bridgeport for the greener fields in the suburbs, resulting in several hundred acres of formerly prime industrial land in the City that lie derelict and abandoned due to the presence or threat of contamination.

OBJECTIVES

The Bridgeport Pilot is working to return contaminated inner-city, derelict land to productive use and to serve as a prototype for other cities to redevelop brownfields. To achieve this objective, the Pilot is encouraging cleanup and economic development, long-term growth, and prosperity by empowering community-based groups to be part of the decision-making process that shapes their

PILOT SNAPSHOT



Bridgeport, Connecticut

Date of Award:
September 1994

Amount: \$200,000

Site Profile: The Pilot targets underutilized, vacant or abandoned properties in inner-city Bridgeport that the City hopes to return to productive use.

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<http://www.epa.gov/brownfields>

neighborhoods and the City. The City expects that the resuscitation of Bridgeport's brownfields will lead to the creation of new jobs, local economic growth, increased tax base, increased property values, and improved quality of life for the surrounding community.

ACCOMPLISHMENTS AND ACTIVITIES

The Pilot has:

- Conducted field studies to identify underutilized, vacant, or abandoned properties;
- Established an inventory of 205 brownfields sites;
- Ranked brownfields sites for development potential using a database prioritization model;
- Categorized and prioritized cleanup of redevelopable properties based on the degree of reclamation work necessary under the State's environmental laws. The City, various City departments, the Connecticut Department of Environmental Protection and Economic Development, the Community Linkage for Environmental Action Now (CLEAN), and a local community task force have been working together;
- Selected six high-priority sites for "highest and best use" studies using the database model in combination with other experimental and intuitive criteria;
- Conducted Phase I site assessments on the six sites;
- Prepared redevelopment strategies for each of these six sites; and
- Held an "Environmental Job Training and Education Summit" to showcase opportunities within the environmental technology field and encourage community involvement and awareness of environmental issues.

The Pilot is:

- Hosting an "Investors Forum" to showcase development opportunities of the prioritized sites;
- Initiating cooperative relationships with other Federal

and State agencies and local groups and institutions to develop programs and services that enhance urban revitalization efforts in brownfields areas;

- Linking cleanup and redevelopment efforts with appropriate job training opportunities;
- Identifying environmental obstacles to brownfields redevelopment;
- Estimating duration and methods of cleanup and availability of funding;
- Coordinating with the Housatonic Community and Technical College to offer environmental science courses to students who can then assist in City redevelopment efforts;
- Finalizing an educational brochure on the brownfields program;
- Targeting local businesses wishing to lease or purchase additional space to encourage them to participate in the brownfields effort and remain in Bridgeport; and
- Evaluating the reclamation effort's success at the conclusion of the Pilot projects.

LEVERAGING OTHER ACTIVITIES

Experience with the Bridgeport Pilot has been a catalyst for related activities including the following.

- Westinghouse completed building demolition of the former Bryant Electric site. The Pilot is conducting site assessment activities. Once site cleanup is completed, the property will be transferred to the City by the current owners. The City is negotiating with potential developers to locate a 140,000 square foot manufacturing facility at the site. The project is expected to create 400 jobs.
- Received an "Economic Adjustment" grant of \$200,000 from the Economic Development Administration for site characterization efforts.
- A combination of Federal, State and private funds have been combined to capitalize a \$7 million "Grow Bridgeport" fund for small business financing, site assessment, and remediation. This

“Limited Liability Corporation” (LLC) will establish a loan program for site characterization and remediation efforts.

- The City of Bridgeport will also receive nearly \$3 million in Federal Enterprise Community funds to implement its 10-year strategic plan. The budget proposes \$200,000 for brownfields-related job training and an additional \$200,000 for additional site characterization.
- The EPA and the National Park Service are working out an interagency agreement which will support local effort for the local Groundwork Trusts, a program established to assist local communities to reclaim brownfields sites for park and recreation use. The Federal Enterprise community has budgeted \$200,000 towards this effort.
- The American Institute of Architects (AIA) used a former power plant in Bridgeport as the focus for an Environmental Design Charrette (EDC). The purpose of this charrette is to bring together diverse elements of the community to collaborate for a comprehensive view of the interconnection between economic need, community development, and long-term environmental stability.
- Governor Rowland has appointed a “Team Bridgeport” to develop a State action plan for the redevelopment of Bridgeport. The Governor has pledged \$2 million in State funds to support for site purchase and land assembly, environmental assessment, remediation design, and cleanup.
- MITRE, a national non-profit engineering firm, is researching investment firms and banks to determine what information the banking world needs to approve funding of brownfields properties.
- The Central High School is working with students to prepare a video on the Brownfields Program in Bridgeport.